DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 200 944 CS 006 037

AUTHOR	Neill, Shirley Boes
TITLE	58 Ways to Improve Student Reading. Tips from Successful Teachers in the National Diffusion Network.
INSTITUTION	Far West Lab. for Educational Research and Development, San Francisco, Calif.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of Education, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	81
CONTRACT	300-80-0839
NOTE	12p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Order Dept., Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1855 Folsom St., San Francisco, CA 94103 ($0.50 handling charge plus self-addressed, stamped envelope).
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Classroom Techniques; *Content Area Reading; Elementary Secondary Education; Reading Improvement; *Reading Instruction; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS	National Diffusion Network; National Diffusion Network Programs

ABSTRACT

The suggestions in this booklet on teaching students to read came from successful veteran teachers who are trying to help other teachers to improve their teaching skills. The 58 ideas are arranged according to the following topics: (1) tips on encouraging young students to read, (2) tips on encouraging teenagers to read, (3) tips for content area teachers to use with junior high school students, (4) tips for content area teachers to use with remedial students, (5) what to do when the text is too difficult for a student, and (6) suggested assignments following independent reading. (RL)

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How-To Tips

ED200944

58 Ways to Improve Student Reading

Tips From Successful Teachers in the National Diffusion Network

NDN

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Acknowledgments

These NDN programs supplied tips as indicated:

Alphaphonics: Reading Readiness Training Program, Ponderosa School, 295 Ponderosa Rd., South San Francisco, Calif. 94080; 415/588-8082 (tips 1-3, 5).

Kenosha Model: Academic Improvement Through Language Experience, Kenosha Unified School District, 812 50 St., Kenosha, Wis. 53140; 414/656-6378 (tips 4, 7-17).

HOSTS: Help One Student To Succeed, 5802 MacArthur Blvd., Vancouver, Wash. 98661; 206/694-1705 (tip 6).

SEAPORT: Student Education Assuring Positive Organized Reading Techniques, Newport School Department Administration Center, Grant Programs Office, Mary St., Newport, R.I. 02840; 401/849-4588 (tips 18-20).

VRP: Reading Power in the Content Areas (Vocational Reading Power), The EXCHANGE, 166 Peik Hall, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn. 55455; 612/376-8234 (tips 21-31).

Positive Attitude Toward Learning (PATL), Bethalto Unit #8 Schools, 322 E. Central, Bethalto, Ill. 62010; 618/377-7213 (tips 32-43). Reproduced with permission from *Individualized Instruction*, copyright 1975 PATL.

IRIT: Intensive Reading Instructional Teams, 42 Charter Oak Ave., Hartford, Conn. 06106; 203/566-6627 (tips 44-58).

Writer: Shirley Boes Neill

Produced by the ED Materials/Support Center,
FAR WEST LABORATORY FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
with support from a subcontract under contract #300-80-0839 with the Department of Education, Spring 1981.

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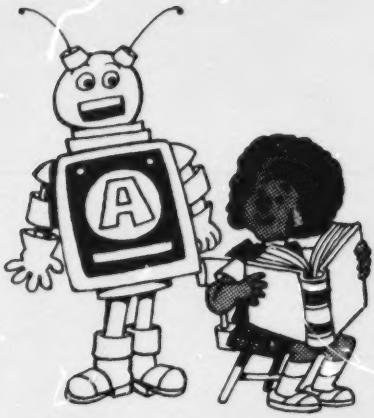
Introduction

The suggestions in this booklet on teaching students to read came from successful veteran teachers who are in the business of helping other teachers to become better at what they do.

The teachers are part of a federal system known as the National Diffusion Network (NDN). The NDN provides dissemination funds to approximately 140 education projects so they can help other schools to adopt or adapt their exemplary programs. Located in 37 states, these projects can supply programs in a variety of areas: basic skills, early childhood/parent readiness, special education, gifted and talented, health, physical education, environmental education, science, social science, career/vocational education, preservice/inservice training, bilingual/migrant education, alternative schools programs, adult education, organization/administration, arts, communication, and technology. The NDN also funds Facilitators in each state whose job is to match NDN projects and schools and organizations that want to adopt their programs.

Each NDN program was started by a teacher working in a real classroom with real students. The problems these teachers faced in trying to help students are repeated daily in thousands of classrooms nationwide. But these teachers were lucky. They received federal funds—some for up to 10 years—to enable them to find a solution to the specific problem they faced. Now these teacher/developers of NDN programs travel around the country providing inservice training to teachers and other educators in schools that adopt their programs.

Reading is just one of the areas in which NDN can offer programs for adoption. In the same way, the tips in this booklet are just a sampling of ideas from some NDN teachers. For more information about the NDN or for a list of NDN programs and facilitators, complete the return postcard at the back of this brochure.



Tips on Encouraging Young Students to Read

1. Build up expectations.
   - Principals should expect more of teachers.
   - Teachers should expect more of students.
   - Students should expect to do well.

2. Encourage parents to expect more of their children.

3. Use a prop with very young children. One NDN program, Alphaphonics, uses a doll that looks like a visitor from outer space. He becomes the young children's friend, listens to them recite the alphabet, and brings them assignments, surprises, and treats.

4. Form a reading club, whose name can be silk-screened onto kids' T-shirts. Kids love T-shirts. Involve parents by having them bring a plain T-shirt to school where they can work with a volunteer to silk-screen the name of the club onto the T-shirt.

5. Principals should take (or make) time to hear students read. Kids love it; so do most principals.

6. Use parents, paraprofessionals, and volunteers to give students more individual attention and a chance to read one-to-one with another person. Using an upper-grade student as a model/tutor helps the younger *and* the older student.

Tips on Encouraging Teens to Read

7. Find books of interest to teenagers. Look for paperbacks about popular TV programs and movies. Find books that deal with teenage problems, such as drugs, dating, and sports.

8. Make sure teenagers have library cards; encourage visits to the library.

9. Encourage teenagers to share books with friends and relatives.

10. Select a variety of books, including some that are not difficult. Make magazines that interest teenagers available.

11. Use the newspaper for informal reading and to practice information finding skills.

12. Refer to reading material for answers to specific problems, such as how to fix a bike or how to sew.

13. Make reading fun; avoid creating pressure to read the "right" books or to make all reading into schoolwork.

14. Give the pronunciation of words when asked.

15. Don't make teenagers look in the dictionary for every unfamiliar word.

16. Don't insist that students get every word exactly right if they are getting the correct meaning.

17. Be as positive as possible; offer praise.

Tips for Content Area Teachers to Use with Junior High Students

18. Work closely with the school or district reading specialist.

- Invite the reading specialist into the classroom to demonstrate lessons on study skills that are relevant to the particular content area.
- Set aside planning time to inform the reading specialist of the content to be covered in the next few weeks so remedial lessons can include content material.
- Obtain suggestions from the reading specialist for materials and methods that can be used while covering content so that the needs of low-level readers can be met.

19. Determine whether the students are auditory or visual learners. This information can be used to adapt such things as teaching styles, student materials, and classroom seating arrangements to students' preferred learning styles.

- If a student is weak in comprehension and is an *auditory* learner, previous lessons should be reviewed orally before a new lesson is begun. The main ideas of a chapter should be discussed while they are outlined on the board. The student should be drawn into discussions as much as possible. Excessive written assignments should be avoided. Consider alternatives to written tests, such as taping tests or dictating them orally.

- If the student is more *visually* oriented, it's important to outline main ideas on the board. The student should be encouraged to write down important points in a notebook or on a worksheet. The use of visual clues such as maps, pictures, and graphs should be encouraged. So should the underlining of key words in reading or on tests.

20. Become familiar with the common reading problems of the students in the class by obtaining information about each student's reading level.

- List each student's reading level after his name in the class record book.
- Note subscores when available, as they may suggest possible strengths and weaknesses.
- Administer a questionnaire to obtain each student's view of his or her reading needs.
- Administer a simple cloze test to screen quickly each student's ability to understand the text being used.
- Using the textbook as a guide, develop an informal study skills inventory to help determine which skills will be needed by the students to understand the text and to complete assignments. This inventory should include items that measure *vocabulary* (context, prefix, suffix, and root words as aids to meaning), *comprehension* (following directions, sequences, organization, main ideas, supporting details), and *locational skills* (graphs, charts, tables, figures, scales, diagrams, glossary, table of contents, index, appendixes, chapter headings, and subtitles).

Tips for Content Area Teachers to Use with Remedial Students

21. Know the reading ability of your students.

22. Accept the difference between your reading ability and that of your students.

23. Determine readability levels of the printed materials that you use.

24. Select printed material appropriate for concept development and student ability.

25. Differentiate assignments to fit individual students' reading ability.

26. Provide direction for each reading assignment.

27. Teach vocabulary critical for understanding concepts.

28. Reinforce technical vocabulary by repetition.

29. Use visual aids, especially for low-ability students.

30. Remember, in working with remedial students, that it may take twice as long to do half as much.

31. Ask the reading teacher or reading specialist how you can help students.

What to Do When the Text Is Too Difficult for a Student

32. Have other students (or parents or volunteers) tape-record the text or at least the important sections.

33. Arrange for someone else to read the materials to the student.

34. Use audiovisual aids as alternatives to texts.

35. Order sample copies of other books.

36. Obtain easier-to-read books through the library and the curriculum coordinator.

37. Rewrite the book or section.

38. Use student helpers and resource persons.

39. Provide alternative assignments that do not require the use of a text.

40. Arrange for a group of students to read the material and present it to the class.

41. Limit the amount of required reading.

42. Make use of classic comic books.

43. Use available filmstrips and records.

Suggested Assignments Following Independent Reading

44. Write a letter to the main character in the story. Suggest what might have happened if he had acted in another way.

45. Write eight incomplete sentences about the story. See if someone else can supply the missing details.

46. Find sentences in the story that tell how something sounds, looks, feels.

47. Choose a character from the story and one from another story. Plan a meeting between these two people. Write a conversation between the two characters, as in a play.

48. Make 10 vocabulary cards. Put a word on the front of each card. On the back write the pronunciation, definition, and a sample sentence. See which words a friend knows. Work together in learning unfamiliar words.

49. Choose a story character. Pretend that something he or she owned in the story has been lost. Write an advertisement for the daily paper's lost-and-found column in an effort to get it back.

50. Write a comparison of one character in the story with a real person you know. How are they alike? How are they different?

51. Draw a picture of one of the memorable scenes in the story. Show as many details as you can.

52. Tell the high points of the story in five brief sentences.

53. Pretend you are a news editor in the city where the characters live. Write two articles that could have appeared in the paper at the time the story took place. Write headlines for the articles.

54. Write three riddles about the story. Put them on cards with the answers on the back. Try them on a friend.

55. Make a poster advertising the story. Make it bright, bold, and simple. Put it up for others to see.

56. Invent a symbol alphabet (A=/, B=#, C=$, etc.). Use this code to write a message to a friend about an exciting part of the story that you read. Have your friend decode it.

57. Make your story into a popular song. Write it down, and sing it to the class if you want to.

58. Write an epilogue to your book—what happened after the book ends.